

## MEDIA INFORMATION

Congresswoman

**Sheila Jackson Lee**

18th District - Texas



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
June 25, 2008

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### CONGRESSWOMAN SHEILA JACKSON LEE HOLDS CONGRESSIONAL HEARING ON GOODYEAR TIRE PLANT EXPLOSION

*Jackson Lee Holds Congressional Investigation on Goodyear Tire Plant  
Explosion: Improving Risk Management For The Department Of Homeland  
Security*

Washington, DC—Today, Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee, Chair of the House Homeland Security Subcommittee on Transportation Security and Infrastructure Protection, released the following statement Chairing a Congressional Hearing investigating the elements that contributed to the recent explosion of the Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company Chemical Plant:

I am proud to convene today's hearing, which will focus on the government's homeland security approach to risk management. Two weeks ago, there was a tragic accident at the Goodyear chemical plant in Houston, Texas. It is my belief that these types of accidents can be avoided if the appropriate risk management strategies are put in place.

If the Department of Homeland Security can facilitate a comprehensive risk management program across the Federal government and the private sector, it will go a long way toward preventing additional tragedies like the one that occurred in my hometown.

In particular, I want to thank Mr. Raymond McInnis for his courage to testify here today after tragically losing his wife two weeks ago in the chemical explosion at the Goodyear plant. We must push our nation's chemical plants to take all of the necessary precautions to ensure that their employees and the American people are not put in unnecessary danger. Mr. McInnis will address the concerns he has about the safety of the Goodyear plant, and what he thinks could have been done to better protect his wife and her fellow employees. Mr. McInnis, thank you very much for being here today.

I would like to note that Goodyear declined our invitation to testify today; however, I have been assured that I will be kept informed of the developments related to its investigation of this serious matter. I will not rest until we know the cause of this accident, and how we can mitigate against such events in the future.

Chairman Thompson, Ranking Member Lungren, and I have taken a special interest in risk management. The reason for this is clear: Scarce Federal resources must be devoted to implementing meaningful homeland security strategies and programs designed to reduce risk from all hazards. I applaud Secretary Chertoff for espousing a

risk-based approach to homeland security, and today we are going to learn more about what that means and how it can be improved.

Our focus on risk management could not come at a more meaningful time. The threat to our nation still exists and the resources to mitigate that threat must be allocated efficiently. We are in a budgetary situation that requires us to make difficult choices and to embrace a risk management strategy that will help us make rational investment decisions with our homeland security dollars. This Subcommittee has sent three letters to the Department in an effort to understand its risk-management practices. We have not been satisfied with many of its responses. Today, I look forward to getting answers from Under Secretary Jamison, who oversees many of the Department's risk-related programs.

Our approach to homeland security risk management must encompass all of the Federal departments and agencies, State and local governments, and the private sector.

Today we will hear from the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey. It has developed what I consider to be an effective risk management program. The more we learn about these types of successes, the more alternatives we have to choose from in adopting and promoting strategies at the Federal level.

I am fully aware that no methodology or analytical tool exists that will serve as a magic bullet. Instead, there needs to be a baseline—or set of principles—that guides the Department's components so that they can develop new methods of risk analysis to support their activities.

I have many concerns about the Department's Office of Risk Management and Analysis. It has yet to produce a baseline or a set of principles to guide the Department's risk management program; it has also yet to justify its \$10 million budget. Still more troubling is the fact that there is no clear legislative or executive mandate supporting this Office, and it is unclear to this Subcommittee whether it has the necessary authority to do its job.

Today's discussion will not end here, but I hope it will encourage the Department to implement policies adequate for the task at hand. I look forward to hearing the opinions of our witnesses on a new risk management Presidential directive; the potential for a "Chief Homeland Security Risk Officer" and a "National Homeland Security Risk Assessment"; and how we can ensure that budget recommendations are based upon risk-management principles. Furthermore, we want to know where the Office Risk Management and Analysis fits into the Department's risk management program.

Once again, I would like to thank everyone for their participation today, and I look forward to hearing from our witnesses.

At this time, I would like to enter two documents into the record. The first is a statement submitted by Dr. Henry H. Willis of the Rand Corporation entitled, "Challenges of Applying Risk Management to Terrorism Security Policy." The second is an April 2008 report by GAO, "Highlights of a Forum: Strengthening the Use of Risk Management Principles in Homeland Security."

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